



Research Articles

Gutierrez's Concepts of Individualism and Equality as Related to Similar Concepts of Karl Marx and John Dewey

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INTRODUCTION

In the 1970s a new philosophy was evolving in Central and South America, which promoted such a reconstruction of society, with greater equality between all social classes and within bureaucratic institutions that control the lives of people; this new philosophy was called liberation theology. Jose Miguez Bonino (2004) wrote:

I have already mentioned Gutierrez' reference to the understanding of poverty and the poor in structural terms as a social class. It reflects the beginnings of Liberation Theology and it remains a fundamental consideration, which has to be constantly actualized as economic and social conditions change... (p. 33)

Gustavo Gutierrez, who published *A Theology of Liberation in 1973*, emerged during this time as one of the main spokespersons for this movement (Gibson, 2015). The foundation of liberation theology is based on a total perspective of liberation, including social, economic, and political liberation (Gutierrez, 1984). It incorporates an integral alternative to the present social structures, combines pragmatic as well as utopian visions of a just society, and this integral vision includes the reconstruction of education. Boff, Boff and Burns (1983), wrote: "Liberation theology was born when faith confronted the poor. By 'poor' we do not really mean the poor individual who knocks on the door asking for alms. We mean the collective poor, the 'popular classes,' which is a much wider category than the 'proletariat' singled out by Karl Marx" (p. 3). They continued: "In liberation, the oppressed come together, come to understand their situation through the process of conscientization" (p. 4). Gutierrez emphasized that liberation theology must present an alternative

which includes all aspects of reconstruction. Though liberation theology began in Latin America and spread throughout the world, this movement is still alive fifty years later.

Gutierrez is Peruvian, as well as a Dominican priest and theologian, who situates liberation within spirituality not in an esoteric framework but situated in the lives of everyday people who are oppressed by the ruling class, their religion, economic and cultural structures, and their life experiences. He was ordained in 1959. Part Quechua Indian, Gutierrez as a mestizo was not raised in an aristocratic family but shined as a student at San Marcos University, which resulted in an opportunity to pursue graduate education at several European Catholic universities where he developed an understanding of traditional theology and Catholic teachings. Upon his return to Peru he began to see how the Church had a duty to address structural systems that created social injustices, and at the same time joined a Catholic Action movement. It was during this time that Gutierrez began to articulate a theology of liberation and its preferential option for the poor, where the poor become active agents in their liberation. In a speech at Boston College (2015) he articulated that this movement is not about poverty, but about the poor who cannot be simplified by economic metrics, and is akin to and intertwined with the women's movement, Black liberation, as well as the many similar movements that were occurring around the world around the same time. Though the seeds were planted in the late 1950s, when liberation theology emerged in the late 1960s through the early 70s, it was viewed by conservative Catholics as a Marxist version of the Gospels. With the elections of Popes John Paul II (1978) and Benedict XVI (2005) liberation theologians and their supporters were for the most part silenced. In 2015, two years after the election of Pope Francis, Gutierrez was invited to the Vatican where the world received the message that liberation theology would no longer "remain in the shadows where it has been relegated for some years" (Gibson, 2015, p. 1).

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This research situates Gutierrez within the pragmatic tradition of John Dewey as well as the social reconstruction tradition of Karl Marx using the conceptual lens of equality and individualism. These three iconic theorists wrote about social educational reform and reconstruction in response to the social conditions in their respective eras, and achieved notoriety based not only on their own writings but also upon the proliferation of interpretations and analyses of their writings by both their critics and followers. Marxist sociology is incorporated directly into Gutierrez's work (Gutierrez, 1984), and therefore an understanding of Marx on education leads to a better understanding of Gutierrez's social analysis of education. The inclusion of Dewey is important for several reasons: He is among the most prolific and profound educational theorists in the United States. And while differing on many points with Marx, Marx had a significant impact upon his writings as well as the interpretation of his writing by his critics (Brameld, 1956). Comparing Dewey's theories to similar ones in liberation theology offers a contrasting analysis. My research on liberation theology began in the early 1980s and yet is still relevant today as the concepts of equality and individualism clash as illustrated by culture and class wars that divide the United States around climate change, Black Lives Matter, worker rights, immigration, LGBTQ rights, Indigenous movements, economic policies and classism.

EQUALITY AND INDIVIDUALISM

Kirby Page wrote *Individualism and Socialism* during the post-Progressive era in the late 1920s and early 1930s, in which he examined these constructs during the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries. Page presented a positive, if not optimistic, perspective on the subject and foresaw institutional democracy as a successful vehicle to promote equality. Christopher Lasch wrote the *Culture of Narcissism* in 1979, and incorporated much of the same historical evidence used by Page, adding the intervening fifty years. Based on what Lasch cited as recent developments, his thesis is pessimistic toward society's future. John W. Gardner (1961) in *Excellence: Can We Be Equal and Excellent Too* lauds the democratic system that nurtures equality of opportunity and leans towards the merits of individualism versus equality. And Joel Spring (1980) in *Educating the Worker-Citizen* delineated the shortcomings of those philosophies that promote equal opportunity and argued that equality occurs only within a continuum relative to individualism.

Page's (1933) notion of individualism is embodied in laissez-faire theories based on survival of the fittest, competition, inherent selfishness, and personal interests. "Each man coveting to make himself rich carries on the Publick Good... a rich man is a great friend of the Publick while he aims at nothing but serving himself" (p. 6). Lasch (1979) used the analytical lens of Eric Fromm's concepts of vanity, self-admiration, self-satisfaction and self-glorification as synonyms of social individualism, concluding that: "The culture of competitive individualism, in its decadence, has carried the logic of individualism to the extreme of a war of all against all, the pursuit of happiness to the dead end of a narcissistic preoccupations with self" (p. 23). Also in contrast to Page, Lasch pointed out that the democratization of education has not reduced the gap between the wealthy and poor, and moreover is not deemed desirable by government or the power elite. Rather, a passive and "stupefied populations" best suits the work force and public education caters to this system (p. 224).

Gardner (1961) described some of the virtues and weaknesses of a society that advocates for either equalitarianism or individualism, and called for a moderating blend of these two political philosophies. Gardner contended that within almost all societies there are "three competing principles—hereditary privilege, equalitarianism, and competitive performance" (p. 21). His

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adherence to the philosophy that American culture is based on individual performance, and education is designed to identify and sort out

those individuals with valuable talents. In contrast, Spring (1980) stated that in the American political system equality of power among citizens over government is impossible "because of differences among citizens in income, status and education" (p. 199), and decisions "are made in the arena of competitive elites" (p. 109). Spring went on to argue that "self-interests" and "competition" foster "economic individualism", which results in the alienation one member in society from another (p. 28).

These concepts of equality and individualism represent two opposing views in the United States. Although, Page, Lasch, Gardner and Spring offer competing perspectives on the balance of equality and individualism, their arguments albeit within their historical context are still being

contested today. Lasch, though, is the most pessimistic and maybe the most prophetic in that the only principle an advanced technological society promotes is maintaining the status quo, and this will only result in mediocrity. All four of these social analysts had differing views of equality and individualism, but agreed that society should not be based purely on equality or individualism; in essence they promoted a system that melded these philosophical constructs together. From a United States perspective, these four provide the conceptual lens that is used to explore the Gutierrez's concept of individualism and equality when juxtaposed against Dewey and Marx.

MARX AND DEWEY

Theodore Brameld (1956) in *Toward a Reconstructed Philosophy of Education* noted that early Soviet Union education was very progressive and heavily influenced by "certain beliefs of such thinkers as Dewey" (p. 152). Brameld also concluded that Marx and Dewey were in agreement on certain educational principles such as "learning by doing, the social studies as the heart of the curriculum, and student participation in curriculum planning" (p. 152). In *Education for the Emerging Age* Brameld (1950) began this comparison by stating that Marx and Dewey, along with Hegel, Whitehead, and Mead, affected the general transformation from "overspecialization and compartmentalization" toward an integrated "general education" (p. 135).

Melvin Lasky (1976) in *Utopia and Revolution* observed the developing fusion of Marx and Dewey philosophies by many United States' scholars. Edwin Burt (1970) in his essay "The Philosophy of Man as an All-Embracing Philosophy" also saw this fusion where Marx is concerned with the emancipation of man as a social being, while Dewey concentrated on the problems of man within society, yet noted that both Marx and Dewey were both reconstructionist. Donald Seckinger (1975) utilized Brameld's writings to establish a link between Marx and Dewey: "We might characterize Brameld's conception of the human condition as that of an impatient variation on John Dewey, or a mellow interpretation of Karl Marx" (p. 146).

Perhaps the most compelling comparison is found in Jim Cork's (1950) essay, "John Dewey and Karl Marx", where he asserted that these philosophers are more similar than many critics care to admit. He argued that though often viewed through the lens of communism and the Soviet Union, Marx was not nearly the radical extremist as his critics make him out to be. Cork quoted Marx from the *Holy Family*:

It is our business to order the empirical world in such a way that man shall have truly human experiences in it, shall experience himself to be a human being... We are not among the communists who are out to destroy personal liberty, who wish to turn the world into one huge barrack or into a gigantic workhouse. (p. 346)

Cork continued this comparison of Marx and Dewey by quoting Dewey (1935) from *Liberalism and Socialism*:

Organized social planning put into effect for the creation of an order in which industry and finance are socially directed in behalf of institutions that provide the material basis for the cultural liberation and growth of the individual is not the sole

method of social action by which liberalism can realize its professional aims. (p. 348)

This comparison suggests that both men agreed that society needs to allow each individual room to grow and experience life in a unique way, and that society needs to be organized and have direction in order to provide for the growth of culture and individual freedoms. Cork was baffled by Dewey's (1939) strong criticism of Marx in *Freedom and Culture*, which was published only four years after the above quote was published and wrote Dewey for clarification of this contradiction. Dewey replied that he is a democratic socialist, which Cork interpreted as not being too far removed from Marx's politics and attempted to explain this paradox by arguing that Dewey was confusing Marx with twentieth century Marxism.

Joel Spring (1980) in *Educating the Worker-Citizen* also determined that Marx and Dewey shared many observations on society and criticism of its institutions—where they differed was in their perceived solutions. For example, both men observed the negative effects of industrialization on the individual. Yet Dewey rejected Marx's analysis based on social class and worker seizure of the means of production, and instead sought to change ideas and institutions within the existing society, believing the educational system would provide the impetus for this change. Spring hypothesized that if “Marx can be considered the intellectual architect for modern socialism, so John Dewey can be considered the intellectual architect of the modern welfare state” (p. 31).

Marx's Perspective

Marx's (1956) view of equality is complex as he was aware that not all social positions and types of labor are equal, yet he did propose a society where they would be somewhat equal. He envisioned a system where different types of labor have equal value, where “all labour is expressed as equivalent human labour, and consequently a labour of equal worth” (p. 86). He was in fact not an advocate for strict and pure equality, and called for the right of inequality. Marx described pure equality as, “a given amount of labour in one form is exchanged for an equal amount in another form” (p. 257), and this level of equality was achievable if different forms of labor could be compared, i.e., a farmer's labor to that of a clerk. He was aware that there were differences between an individual's endowed gifts, such as physical and mental capacity, and was cognizant that individuals have different responsibilities such as being married with children and being single. In his most famous formula, “from each according to his ability to each according to his needs” (p. 258), Marx proposed that the rights of citizens are unequal instead of equal.

Wilson (1940) suggested that Marx integrated individual rights with equality, and noted that Marx believed that the ideal of equality is a historical concept and did not constitute “eternal truth” (p. 304), in that equality evolves differently with each generation and between societies. It was out of this framework that Marx ridiculed Pierre-Joseph Proudhon's philosophy of mutualism, and argued that it is a historical right to own property, asserting that each individual is entitled to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” (p. 305). According to Wilson, Marx found the reason people are unable to realize these natural rights is because governments favor the elite, and therefore act against the wishes and needs of the masses.

Marx (1973) wrote that individualism does not exist outside “the scope of organized systems” (p. xxxv), and faults the French Revolution in *The Eighteenth Brumaire* (1972) as having the purpose of “setting up a bourgeois society” (p. 437). Marx (1972) submitted that when competition is centered on individual rights and initiatives it is not in the best interest of the state or the individual, and rejected laissez-faire politics because it “signifies unlimited despotism of one class over other classes” (p. 444). Marx then accused the bourgeois society of wanting the freedom of individualism only for the elite and privileged classes, as freedom of individualism only allowed the elite to exploit the majority of people who were not privileged. In contrast, Marx, just as Rousseau before him, positioned his philosophy within the belief that that self-awareness and actualization of the individual can be realized only within a community “in which everyman participates without consciousness of his separateness” (Manual & Manual, 1979, p. 447). Marx (1972) not only questioned unabated individualism but also individualism or groups and their self-serving nature. He disagreed with the notion that individuals and groups have the right to emancipate or separate from society and the majority.

Marx’s ideals of education were influenced by his views on equality and individualism, as government sponsored education was unable to create social change because it tended to rationalize the existing order. He (1975) wrote: “On one hand, a change of social circumstances is required to establish a proper system of education; on the other hand, a proper system of education is required to bring about a change in circumstances” (p. 32). Because Marx realized that education by itself is unable to bring about social change, he stated that both church and state should be excluded from providing education as both institutions are part of the power elite and therefore their education is biased. He argued that when church and state are involved in education, their goal is to develop supporters of their system rather than critical thinkers who do not have “servile” beliefs, and warned that education which is controlled by either state or church will be a slave unable to “transgress the bourgeois level” (p. 21). Yet he recognized that a lack of education is, in part, responsible for the workers’ economic subversion, and if they were educated on the mechanism of the state’s economy they would resist the existing power structure. Marx’s solution was for workers to educate their own children, which could be accomplished through a commune where everyone had equal access, held equal importance, and where everyone received a quality education.

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Dewey’s Perspective

Dewey wrote extensively on equality and individualism, which only have meaning in the context of community or in association with others. In 1927 Dewey published *The Public and its Problems*, in which he stated, “fraternity, liberty, and equality isolated from communal life are hopeless abstractions” (p. 149). He suggested that equality is “impossible of realization” and if there ever is equality the results will be “mediocrity in which good is common only in the sense of being average and vulgar” (p. 150). And he defined equality as the “the unhampered share

which each individual member of the community has in consequences of associated actions” (p. 150), emphasizing that equality is not a natural possession rather it is something that is created within a community.

As the central figure in the Progressive Era and a proponent of political intervention, Dewey believed that freedom and political equality are essential to the strength of a society. In *Problems of Man* Dewey (1946) argued that these can only be guaranteed by political means within the government, and advocated for a democratic form of government as the best vehicle to achieve the goals of equality and freedom—referring to this as the “democratic credo” (p. 60). He, as did Marx, understood that individuals are endowed with different levels of physical and mental gifts, yet asserted that the responsibility of government is to insure legal and political equality. Thus, he envisioned that each person be allowed to enjoy “equal opportunity of development of his own capacities” (p. 60) and wrote about a democratic form of equality rather than pure equality, such that if I have the right to individual freedom of expression so do you. Naively he argued that democracy is a shared experience among coequal individuals.

In *Democracy and Education* Dewey (1916) devoted most of the chapter, “The Individual and the World”, to individualism, how it has evolved and its impact on both the individual and society (p. 292). According to Dewey it was during the Middle Ages when the concept of individualism first began to develop, and has roots in religious individualism where the “deepest concern of life was the salvation of the individual soul” (p. 292). During this period Protestantism was introduced, and the individual began “to view that knowledge is won wholly through personal and private experiences” (p. 292).

Dewey defined intellectual individualism as a belief that regards the “individual mind as a separate entity, complete in each person, and isolated from nature and hence from other minds” (p. 297). And continued by articulating moral individualism as the “conscious separation of different centers of life...[with] roots in the notion that the consciousness of each person is wholly private, a self-enclosed continent, intrinsically independent of the ideas, wishes, purposes of everybody else” (p. 297). He noted that both of these definitions are faulted, and that it is a logical error to assume that any one individual can operate independently of the society in which one lives, suggesting that it was German philosophy that rescued France and England in the beginning of the nineteenth century from the growing adherence to “isolated individualism” (p. 300). Continuing this thesis, he argued that this new philosophy, which had previously been promoted by Hegel and adopted by Marx represented a shift away from personal individualism to individualism with society, and organized government limiting the boundaries of individualism within the corporate organizational structure. How Dewey articulated this is a compromise in the evolution of this philosophy because the individual is not separable from society, and, therefore, is fundamentally powerless to achieve full autonomy, even in freedom of thought and ideas.

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In 1929 Dewey published *Individualism Old and New*, which primarily focused on how individualism was viewed in the United States. Dewey sought to protect individual freedoms, but sharply criticized those who were caught up in self-centered individualism and not bound by

“associations” as being “monstrosities” (p. 82). He observed that individualism among a few tends to suppress individuality within others, a criticism directed at corporations who he described as parasites that subordinated “creative individuality” (p. 91). Dewey understood that individualism provides renewed energy in society, but observed how it can lead to immorality and injustice.

Dewey (1927) envisioned education to be a liberating system if reorganized where equality and individualism coexist.

A change in educational methods would release new potentialities, capable of all kinds of permutations and combinations, which would then modify social phenomena, while this modification would in its turn affect human nature and educative transformation in a continuous and endless procession. (p. 199)

His thesis that education can be modified to insure or at least promote such societal goals exemplifies the moderation of individualism to the point of being socialistic via government influence over human nature and behavior. In other words, education as an organized system has the power of social engineering.

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GUTIERREZ'S PERSPECTIVE ON EQUALITY AND INDIVIDUALISM

According to Gutierrez the birth of liberation theology occurred in 1968 when a group of priests working for social change formed Oficina Nacional de Investigacion Social (ONIS) and sponsored a conference in Chimbote, Peru (Brown, 1980). The ONIS priests stated they “believe that social transformation is not simply a revolution for the people, but that the people must take part in their own liberation” (Gutierrez, 1973, p. 113). From the ONIS conference Gutierrez (1983) went to the Latin American Bishops Conference in Medellin, Columbia, where he served as an advisor to several bishops and assisted in writing some of the documents on peace. According to Robert McAfee Brown, who wrote the preface to *The Power of the Poor in History* (Gutierrez, 1983) and was a protestant theologian who served as an observer at the Second Vatican Council, it was during this post-Vatican II bishop’s conference that the Latin American Catholic Church made its first major commitment to alleviate social oppression and injustice, and opened “a whole new way of looking at poverty and misery in Latin America” (p. ix). Eleven years later liberation theologians were barred from the next bishops’ conference in Puebla, Mexico, by a group of conservative bishops and clergy who were threatened by laities’ call for greater control and responsibility as a result of the Medellin conference. Yet, when the final documents were finally agreed upon the liberation theologians wielded considerable influence as the bishops reconfirmed their commitment to the poor. “We wish to heighten our awareness of the obligation to have solidarity with the poor. This means we shall make their problems and struggles our own” (Gutierrez, 1983, p. 128). Although not alone, Gutierrez emerged as the leading liberation theologian in the late 1960s and early 1970s with his contribution to Medellin conference and publication of *A Theology of Liberation* in 1973 (Kirylo, 2011; Lernoux, 1990).

Gutierrez developed sharp contrasts between individualism and equality, and was a strong advocate of equality while suspicious of individualism. When Gutierrez (1983) writings on liberation theology refer to “the journey of an entire people and not of isolated individuals” (p. 72), an understanding evolves that in everyone’s spiritual journey there is a need for solitude from which leads to active participation in community. He clearly delineated these differences that exists between individualism and solitude:

In individualism there is a large measure of withdrawal at the level of thoughts and interests, in order to ensure a life of quiet privacy. Others may come and knock on the door, but if the individualist opens to them, it is as one who does a favor... The experience of solitude, on the other hand, gives rise to a hunger for communion. (p. 132)

Gutierrez (1983) asserted that individualism is a tool of the bourgeoisie, and critiqued the weakness of the French Revolution’s Declaration of the Rights of Men where each person is free to use their physical and mental strength along with personal capital for individual gain. Unrestrained individualism, as exemplified in this laissez-faire quotation, legitimizes the exploitation of the weak by the strong and provides little motivation to encourage individuals to participate within the general context of society. As such, Gutierrez suggested that the individual becomes

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a pawn in a capitalistic society where the free market sets the standards for morality, which will lead to conflict instead of harmony. Thus, Gutierrez concluded, this myth is perpetuated when societies are structured under the premise that free play between individuals will lead to the common interests of the community, and discussed how individualism leads to manipulation and abuses of other community members; this type of system rewards exploitation of the majority by a few, and therefore encourages social inequalities. He also argued that original sin is the “principle of individualism”, which finds “it inadmissible that one person could be responsible for another’s sin” (p. 177)

As part of his argument, Gutierrez (1983) envisioned equality where members within a community assume responsibility for each other. Only in community are individuals strong enough to withstand the “profound inequality, injustice, and exploitation of some by others” (p. 67). Gutierrez’s thesis is that equality is a radical concept, which will not be realized unless everyone is committed to a common goal or as he noted a common faith. Throughout his thesis on liberation theology he often interchanged secular terms with religious terms. For example: “members of society” is used synonymously with “persons to whom the gospel is proclaimed” (p. 69). An analysis of how he interchanged words and phrases highlights the potential for a broader, universal usage of liberation theology concepts. Gutierrez (1973) proposed that individual freedom evolves not out of individual struggle but “as member of a certain class, country, or society” (p. 30), which illustrates how class-consciousness is embedded in his social analysis. Class struggle occurs when “the poor, the oppressed, are members of one social class that is being exploited by another” (Gutierrez, 1983, p. 45), and this is why he argued that the “option for the poor is an option for one social class against another” (p. 45).

Liberation theology, according to Gutierrez (1984), is focused on a society of equals, which is only possible within the context of community. He points out that in Latin America the formation of such communities is seldom undertaken with an aura of joy, rather it is usually a result of painful experiences where the individual discovers that their survival will only occur in communion with others. Solitude, he wrote, “leads to an urgent realization of the importance of Christian community” (p. 129), or in more general terms, through solitude arises the need for community. Moreover, Gutierrez illustrated how the breaking of the bread during communion in the Catholic Church is the sharing of each other’s burdens where everyone joins with each other in responsibility for community. In other words, the Eucharist is the participation in the “supper of the Lord” where everyone “expresses a confidence that the communion of life that does not yet exist among us can become a reality” (p. 134). This mere action of coming together to form community involves a political dimension where individuals realize that there is strength to resist oppression through solidarity, and where everyone shares their burdens accordingly. Thus he (1983) challenged these communities to create “classless societies” (p. 67) and confronted the Catholic Church, criticizing powerful individuals and institutions that “reduce liberation to a religious plane” by using the Gospels to “service their own interests” (p. 69). Gutierrez’s (1973) ideal of a classless society in which principles of social equality exist was and is a threat not only to inherent position of the Catholic Church but also to the United States in its form of exploitive capitalism (p. 88).

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GUTIERREZ, DEWEY AND MARX JUXTAPOSED

Gutierrez is less flexible in his critique of individualism than Dewey and much closer to Marx’s (1972) perspective, in that both argued that laissez-faire principles are the foundation of a “bourgeois society” (p. 437). In addition, Gutierrez and Marx both developed their thesis of freedom within the context of community, as Marx acknowledged that individuals need freedom to develop their talents but this freedom should not be unabated outside the community structure. Dewey wrote much more extensively about individualism than either Gutierrez or Marx, and is also critical of the principles of individualism based on the French Revolution. Yet Dewey (1973) argued that limited relaxation of government rules is needed to encourage individuals to produce, and believed that the scientific community as well as other microcosms within society have benefited through what might he termed entrepreneurial individualism (Dewey, 1946). Although Dewey (1929) was not willing to allow the growth of individualism at the expense of social order, he did write that the individual should be released from certain “legal restrictions because society will benefit from such freedom as well as the individual” (p. 89). Dewey promoted a new type of individualism connected to society and social responsibility where the rewards will be much greater than short-term monetary gains. Gutierrez (1983) never promoted any facsimile of Dewey’s notion of individualism, which supports capitalism with certain government restrictions. Gutierrez strongly articulated that capitalism and individualism are inherently inseparable, and therefore not consistent with the need to overcome exploitation and oppression.

Gutierrez's perspective on equality appears to sharply contrast those of Dewey and even goes beyond Marx, who argued the right of inequality in the *Critique of the Gotha Program*, in which he promoted the individual's rights of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" (Wilson, 1940, p. 304). Moreover, the argument can be made that Marx is in agreement with Gutierrez when he wrote that self-awareness is only realized within community and not at the expense of community (Manual & Manual, 1965). While Marx promoted a classless society he did not promote a society where everyone was equal, and on this point Marx and Dewey are in agreement on equality being a "hopeless abstraction" (Dewey, 1927, p. 149) in that the results will be some level of mediocrity. Both Dewey and Marx focused on systemic change, either through a worker revolution or through a belief in the democratic model in which government can be held accountable to create an environment promoting equal opportunity. While Gutierrez (1983) adopted much of Marx's views on equality and a classless society, he expanded it one step further, in which the principles of social equality prevail where it is not mandated by government rules or through political change but through a spiritual transformation where everyone understands they are part of a community. In this vein Gutierrez sees this change coming from grassroots communities of faith that coalesce

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around issues of injustice and oppression rather than a master plan which is administered by a central government. To

emphasize this distinction, Marx was against the idea of individual groups living separate from a central government whereas Gutierrez allows for the formation of base communities where equality occurs within and between these communities in lieu of putting faith in the hope that a central government or class movement to create this needed change. Gutierrez's model of change occurs when the individual assumes responsibility to make decisions within the context of a classless community of equals, built upon the principles of social equality where everyone within a group or society has the same status and rights, including equal access to social goods and services. Such a system requires an absence of social class and discrimination.

Regarding education, Gutierrez (1983) analyzed the existing education system as being controlled by the marketplace, in that education is not the same as knowledge but something you acquired through a transaction, favoring the status quo and elites who can afford the purchase. In both the marketplace and the area of knowledge, equality cannot exist unless a "principle of social equality" is established (p. 175), where true contracts cannot be negotiated unless the participating parties are equal. Without social equality the bourgeoisie controls the development of knowledge and reason, using them to maintain their grasp and control of society.

CONCLUSION

It is important to note that Marx, Dewey and Gutierrez's theories and analyses reflect the society and culture in which they lived. Marx's writing arose during the industrial revolution where a worker was merely a cog in a machine, easily replaced with little value. Dewey's ideas and values are a product of the Progressive Era and though he had enlightened ideas that compelled educators and social scientists to reflect upon their practice, he too was part of an educational establishment that rewarded him well. We should also consider that Dewey was an active scholar

for nearly forty years, and his ideas and concepts shifted somewhat reflecting the changing times during his tenure. Whereas Gutierrez being mestizo, though part of the Catholic Church's educated community of theologians, witnessed many injustices in post-colonial Latin America. As such the differences in their perspectives and analyses reflect what they observed and lived. In their own way Marx, Dewey and Gutierrez witnessed injustice and oppression and agreed that laissez-faire economics favors individualism and is unjust as the foundation of classism. Marx seems to endow his economic theories with the character of religion, just as Dewey seems to turn democracy into a religion. Yet, Gutierrez's Catholic foundation and education are not enough to explain his personal and theological philosophies; his theology though well founded in Catholic teachings is imbued with his observations and life experiences, and at times is very critical of the Church's hierarchy and bureaucratic limits. He with others developed liberation theology within Church's teachings yet through the eyes of their experience. All three seem to promote a society where individual freedoms and certain levels of equality coexist, albeit the balance between these two constructs varied. Clearly they are in unison promoting a new society with greater equality and justice. Whereas Marx and Dewey place limits on the degree of equality in their ideal society, Gutierrez argued the principles of equality cannot be compromised. Possibly the most fundamental differences are that Gutierrez (1983) alone sees the process of conscientization as essential, in the same vein as Freire (1970), where liberation of society depends upon the liberation of each member within their respective community through a reflective educational process.

The importance of this research to the discourse on social justice is the dialectic challenge of equality and individualism that has perplexed scholars in the United States for over a century (Dewey, 1916, 1927, 1929; Lasch, 1979; Page, 1933; Spring, 1980). In particular, to understand Freire (1970) and Illich's (1973, 1977) theses it is important to situate them within the historical context of liberation theology as both were heavily influenced by this Catholic reform movement. This discourse cannot be explored without first understanding Marx's (1956; 1975) seminal contribution, as well as understanding Dewey's influence on education. Just as Dewey, Gutierrez (1973; 1983, 1984) too was well versed in Marx's writing and is most challenging for secular scholars to understand, in that his writings on a community of equals is based in a strong theological tradition within the Catholic Church. The Eucharist, where the breaking of the bread (the body of Christ) is symbolic of social responsibility in which each member in a community is equal and shares each other's burdens, is foundational to liberation theology, and thus fundamental to understanding Gutierrez's constructs of individualism and equality.

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